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## CINEMA

MARCH 23, 2001

### 'American Desi' by Pandya released in U.S.

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• ['American Desi,' a film](#)

[by Piyush Pandya, is hailed by critics after its release across U.S.](#)



NEW YORK -- 'American Desi,' a film by Piyush Dinker Pandya, opened in theaters throughout the United States on March 16. Presented by Eros Entertainment, it is a Blue Rock Entertainment production in association with American Desi Productions. It has been billed as a "romantic comedy about the colorful lives of Indians raised in America."

The film's story line chronicles the adventures of Krishnagopal Reddy (Deep Katdare). Born and raised in New Jersey as the only son of immigrant Indians, he has long resisted the values embodied by his hard-working parents, says the film's Web site. Striving to become all-American, Krishnagopal shortens his name to "Kris," adopts the supposedly American credo of "sex and drugs and rock and roll" and, at a college party, falls for Nina Shah (Purva Bedi).

Deep Katdare, left, and Purva Bedi in Piyush Dinker Pandya's 'American Desi.' The film is based on the "colorful lives of Indians raised in America."



As he vies for her affections, he is opposed by the smooth-talking Rakesh (Anil Kumar) and aided by an oddball assortment of roommates: Jagjit Singh (Ronobir Lahiri), an outgoing, "artistically-oppressed" Sikh, Salim Ali Khan (Rizwan Manji), a conservative Muslim and Ajay Pandya (Kal Penn), an "Afro-centric" Hindu. What follows is the story of a young man who learns about the intricacies of friendship and the frailty of the ties that bind us to ourselves, the Web site says.

The film, which cost about \$250,000 to make, opened in 32 markets across North America, playing in both specialist Indian theaters and regular art house theaters. Ken Naz, chief executive officer of Eros Entertainment, told *Reuters* the film was "very experimental." Indian audiences traditionally prefer big popcorn extravaganzas with song and dance detours, he said.

The movie was written and directed by Piyush Dinker Pandya, 32, who graduated from Rutgers University in 1990 with a degree in computer science. He studied filmmaking at New York University, Rutgers, and the New School.

Pandya and Katdare have also reportedly teamed up to co-write an untitled action-crime script.

'American Desi' was executive-produced by Katdare and Cyrus Koewing with music by Brian Bongo Davis and Wig.

The film has already received good reviews from the American press. *Fox News* said the movie is "wonderful and charming with a winning cast." The *Hollywood Reporter* described it as "funny... a great slice-of-life story with well-defined characters."

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